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REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. Claims 1-9 and 11-19 were rejected under either or both of §102 based on Nilakantan and §103 based on the combination of Nilakantan and Zheng. Claims 3, 13 and 16 were also rejected under §112, and claims 1-3, 7-10 and 13-18 were also rejected under §101. Claims 1, 3, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 16 are currently amended.

Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The presently claimed invention distinguishes Nilakantan and Zheng, both alone and in combination, because a multi-protocol routing device exclusively associates particular processors with particular, different protocols. The cited references may teach devices having multiple processors, but that is not what is currently recited in the claims. Applicant does not assert to have invented the concept of a single device having multiple processors, but rather the exclusive association of particular processors with particular protocols in a multi-protocol, multi-processor routing device. For example, Fig. 4 shows separate processors for BGP, OSPF, RIP/ISIS, Multicast DVMRP/IGMP, and MPLS. Claims 1, 9 and 14 have been amended to emphasize this distinguishing feature. Claim 1, for example, distinguishes the cited references by reciting "a set of routing processors coupled to the at least one interface, including a first routing processor exclusively associated with a first routing protocol for determining a set of routes; and a second routing processor exclusively associated with a second routing protocol for determining a set of routes." Claims 9 and 14 recite similar language. Claims 2-8, 10-13 and 15-19 are dependent claims which further distinguish the invention, and which are allowable for the same reason as their respective base claims. Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-9 and 11-19 based on Nilakantan and Zheng, both alone and in combination, is therefore requested.

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The Office objected to Fig. 1 because reference characters 104, 106, 108 and 110 were not listed in the specification. The specification has been amended accordingly. Because both the drawing and the specification already used the descriptors ER1-ER4 and R1-R4 to identify the depicted elements, no new matter has been added. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore requested.

Claim 10 was subject to objection because of a typographical error. Claim 10 has been amended accordingly.

Claims 3, 13 and 16 were rejected under §112 as being incomplete for omitting essential structure. Those claims have been amended accordingly. For example, claim 3 now recites "wherein the routing table manager is exclusively associated with a third processor." It is assumed that the assertion that the claims were unclear to the Examiner were predicated on the unnecessary mention of the routing processors. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 1-3, 7-10 and 13-18 were rejected under §101 because of an apparent definition of the term "processor." In particular, the Office asserts that Applicant defined processor in the specification to include software-only and other intangible implementations. Applicant respectfully traverses. Applicant did not specifically define the term "processor" in the specification, and the examples recited in the specification all include tangible hardware. In particular, the specification states that the invention "may be embodied in ... forms including ... computer program logic for use with a processor (e.g., a microprocessor, microcontroller, digital signal processor, or general purpose computer), programmable logic for use with a programmable logic device (e.g., a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) or other PLD), discrete components, integrated circuitry (e.g., an Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC))." (emphasis added) Page 10, line 28 through page 11, line 4. Since each of those

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examples includes tangible hardware, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal or clarification of the rejection.

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Applicants' Attorney at the number listed below so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

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